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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 002552

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/03/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [EG](#) [SY](#) [LE](#)

SUBJECT: MESSAGE ON KEEPING THE PRESSURE ON SYRIA:

EGYPTIAN LEADERSHIP FULLY ON BOARD, CONVEYS MESSAGE TO UN
SRSG TERJE LARSEN

REF: A. STATE 60768

[1](#)B. STATE 60150 (NODIS/NOTAL)

[1](#)C. CAIRO 1705 (NODIS/NOTAL)

Classified by Charge Gordon Gray for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) The Charge spoke separately on April 2 with Presidential Spokesman Soliman Awad and MFA Chief of Staff Sameh Shukry to request the Government of Egypt to reinforce with the Syrian leadership the importance of timely parliamentary elections in Lebanon and of Syria's providing a timetable for departure of all its forces from Lebanon. Drawing from talking points contained in ref A and the memcon in ref B, the Charge pressed for continuing GOE support for full withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon. The Charge also thanked Egypt for its valuable role in advancing the international community's objectives contained in UNSCR 1559, and emphasized the importance of maintaining internal security in Lebanon after a series of recent bombings there.

[1](#)2. (C) MFA Cabinet Chief of Staff Sameh Shukry said UN Special Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG) Terje Larsen told Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit earlier April 2 that he expected Syria on April 3 to provide Larsen with a detailed timetable for withdrawal of all its forces from Lebanon. Larsen reported to the GOE, Shukry confided, that Syrian President Bashar was "sensitive regarding the finger-pointing at Damascus" after four recent bombings in Lebanon. According to Shukry, Egypt had the impression that "the Syrians were taking the situation seriously and understood the gravity of the matter." After conveying the U.S. message to Aboul Gheit, Shukry called the Charge later in the day April 2 to convey the Foreign Minister's assertion that Egypt "would be doing its best" on this issue.

[1](#)3. (C) In response to the Charge's demarche, Presidential Spokesman Soliman Awad said that President Mubarak would be meeting Larsen at 3:30 PM April 2. Awad said that President Mubarak had "spoken very harshly" with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Sharaa after the latter "had lied in Riyadh" in telling the Saudis that Egypt supported the idea of a three-way meeting between Mubarak, Abdullah, and Asad. Mubarak's trip to see Asad in person (March 15) and Egypt's hosting of Lebanese opposition figure Waleed Jumblat (March 21) "reflected President Mubarak's staunch support for Lebanon's sovereignty." Egypt, Awad continued, was encouraging Syria and President Asad to accelerate Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon and to avoid interfering in the political life of Lebanon (ref C).

[1](#)4. (C) Interestingly, MFA Chief of Staff Shukry called the Charge back a second time April 2 (their third conversation that day) following the meeting between President Mubarak and SRSG Larsen to share that the former had strongly urged Syrian President Asad in Algiers on the margins of the Arab League summit to withdraw his forces from Lebanon before elections there. President Mubarak's impression, he noted, was that the Syrians were not responsible for the current security situation in Lebanon (i.e., the four most recent bombings there), and were quite concerned over recent events.

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GRAY